



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: fast track legislation
Da: Thursday, March 22, 2001

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, made the following comment on Sen. Pat Roberts' legislation to renew the President's fast track trade negotiating authority.

"I welcome Senator Roberts' effort to focus the Senate's attention on the importance of renewing the President's trade negotiating authority this year. As I've said many times, the President's lack of trade negotiating authority harms the vital national interests of the United States, because it undermines our credibility at the negotiating table. This isn't a partisan issue. It's an American issue. Whether farmers and business people have greater access to world markets, which we can win at the negotiating table only if our trading partners take us seriously, directly affects the jobs and livelihoods of all Americans. We have to get trade negotiating authority renewed this year so we can give our economy a much-needed boost of confidence.

"This is a top priority for me this year. I'm committed to working on a bipartisan basis to make sure this gets done. I'm open to any reasonable proposal. I suggest one place to start is the very reasonable 1988 legislation renewing the President's trade negotiating authority, which was approved by an overwhelmingly bipartisan 85-11 vote in the Senate. This legislation met the criteria I want to see. It took a comprehensive approach to negotiations. It renewed the President's negotiating authority for a reasonable length of time. It covered both multilateral and bilateral negotiations. It set forth a number of specific negotiating objectives, and required the President to tell Congress exactly what progress was made in achieving those objectives.

"I look forward to working with Senator Roberts, and all members of the Senate, in writing legislation we can send to the President this year."